



The California Science Center is pleased to provide special insights to our generous supporters, Members and donors. Here's what's in this issue of *The Nucleus*:

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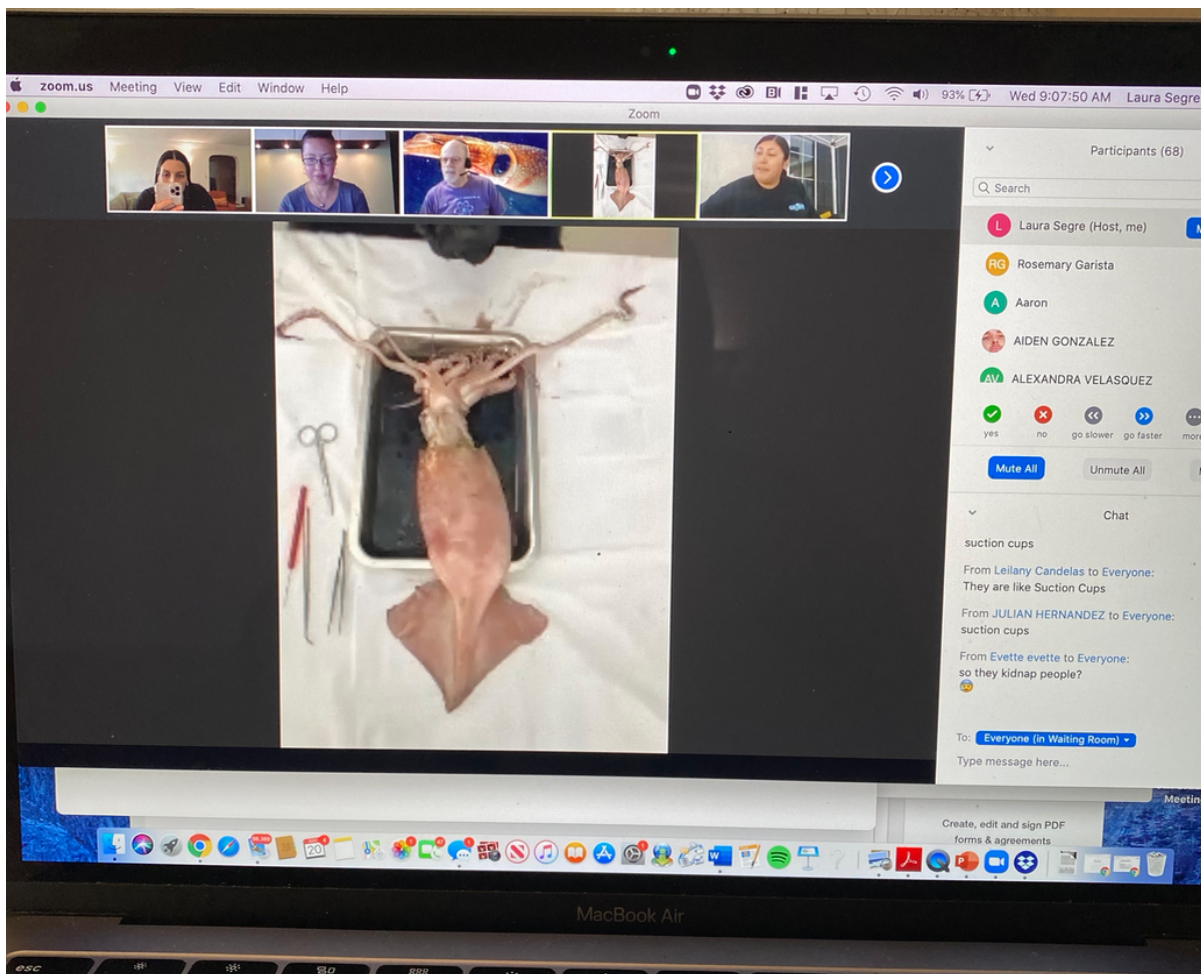
[Virtual Backgrounds](#)

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Science Center family, we hope that you and your loved ones are safe, healthy and continuing to learn. During these incredibly difficult times, your vital support enables the California Science Center to continue our mission to inspire science learning in everyone. As we adapt to challenges and find new ways to serve the community with educational programming and exhibits, we reaffirm our commitment to the Science Center's core values of accessibility and inclusiveness that are at the heart of everything we do.

THANK YOU!

SCIENCE CENTER SCHOOL EXPERIENCES VIRTUAL CATALINA



This year, a fun, science-filled Santa Catalina Island experience – a culminating tradition for the [Dr. Theodore T. Alexander, Jr. Science Center School's](#) 5th grade class, would have been canceled as schools are closed and field trips prohibited. Instead, through the creativity and collaboration of the school faculty, along with the Science Center's Living Collections and Education staff led by Dr. Chuck Kopczak, this field trip became the memorable 3-day Virtual Catalina online experience.

The 5th grade faculty, Michelle McGuire, Laura Segre, Maria Sanchez, Daniela Schatz, Principal Norma Spencer and Dr. Chuck designed a lesson plan to recreate a virtual version of four of the main experiences the students would have had on the island – Squid Dissection, Bird Lab, Fish Lab and Invertebrate Lab.

In prior years, students in the Squid Lab worked in pairs to dissect a small market squid. By comparison, on the first day of Virtual Catalina, Squid Lab had Rosemary Garista, the California Science Center's Professional Development Coordinator, who has been working with the students all year as the 5th grade liaison, fill the role of lab partner. Rosemary sourced the largest common squid Dr. Chuck has ever seen and dissected it on Zoom so everyone could make observations and ask or answer questions using the chat feature.

Bird Lab introduces the students to a variety of common seabirds found along our coast, looking for their various adaptations. To find these birds, in past years the students took to kayaks and

explored the cliffs and rocks on Catalina. On the second day of Virtual Catalina, Bird Lab was made possible with the help of our Terrestrial Husbandry team members, Erin Hoff and Alex Soto. The keepers Erin and Alex presented our turkey vulture and military macaw to give students the data they needed to complete a compare and contrast chart of our two very different birds.

On the final day of Virtual Catalina, we recreated the Fish and Invertebrate Labs. Fish Lab provides an opportunity for students to learn about local fish species. In previous years, students utilized snorkeling equipment to swim near and see these fish in their natural kelp forest habitat. In the Invertebrate Lab they would get to see many different kinds of marine invertebrate species in touch pools at the rocky shore. Instead, with the help of two of our professional dive staff, Andrew Solomon and Lee-Roy Harhaus, the students explored the California Science Center's *Ecosystems* [Kelp Forest exhibit](#) and watched our divers feed many of our fish and demonstrate the use of scuba gear for doing science underwater. As Dr. Chuck cruised around outside the tank with his cell phone connected to a Zoom call, the students saw vibrant orange garibaldi, kelp bass, sheephead and blacksmith as they would have encountered while snorkeling; and some, like our giant sea bass, halibut and yellowtail that they wouldn't have seen while snorkeling. Following the virtual snorkeling experiences they asked Andrew and Lee-Roy questions about how to become a diver, if they had ever been bitten by a fish, and what they would do if they ran out of air under water.

The Invertebrate Lab took place at our *Ecosystems* [Rocky Shore exhibit](#). Students explored the different species found in the Touch Tank, including sea stars, bat stars, sea urchins, sea cucumbers, sea anemones, hermit crabs, wavy-top turban snails, kelp snails and red abalone. Our Aquarist Connor Craig did a special abalone feed to show them that abalone like a nice morning snack of kelp.

Based on the comments that came flying through the chat box on Zoom, the students were very interested and engaged throughout all of the activities. While Virtual Catalina does not replace a trip to the island, it continued the 15-year tradition of providing fun and memorable science learning experiences that has taken on a legendary status among the students at the [Science Center School](#). With the help of all of the wonderful people who participated in Virtual Catalina and the families and donors who provided additional support for the [Science Center School](#), we were able to give our 5th graders a science-filled experience they will surely remember as they dive in to middle school.

SCIENCE BEYOND THE CENTER



Missing your visits to the California Science Center? [Science Beyond the Center](#), a new online portal on our website, will give you special behind-the-scenes access to Science Center exhibits in ways you've never seen before.

We love to wonder and be curious about the world around us. So we're starting a podcast premiering on June 24, called [Ever Wonder?](#) In each new episode, join host Perry Roth-Johnson, PhD, Assistant Curator of Aerospace Science, as he chats with scientists, engineers, museum professionals, and others to find answers to questions you might have wondered. New episodes every other week.

You can also take tours through [Space Shuttle Endeavour](#) and hear exclusive interviews with astronauts. Meet [Ecosystems](#) animals and keepers up close. Explore amazing images and insights from our curators and find out how exhibits are made. And check out some videos from our traveling exhibitions. New content will be added regularly.

Bookmark the [Science Beyond the Center](#) page and check back often to see what's new!

STUCK AT HOME SCIENCE



This week in [Stuck at Home Science](#), dive into our *Ecosystems* gallery. Discover how living things on our planet are interconnected. Explore coral, melting ice and engineer a tool to help feed underwater critters. Bookmark the [Stuck at Home Science](#) page for FREE unlimited access to exciting videos and activity guides that are easy to understand and available in both English and Spanish.

[Stuck at Home Science](#), developed in a collaboration of the California Science Center's diverse staff of content experts, educators and professional development team, is an online series of hands-on and age-appropriate science activities using supplies you can find at home. Activities

feature videos and downloadable lessons that support the Next Generation Science Standards Science and Engineering Practices.

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